

CITY OF NEWTON
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2009

Present: Jim Danila (Transportation Engineer), Danielle Delaney (Clerk), Jerome Grafe (Resident member), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Jim Norcross (Police) and Clint Schuckel (Associate Traffic Engineer). Others Present: Ald. Harney Lennon, and Sangiolo

TC9-09 TAMAKO HARRINGTON, 108 Ward Street, Chestnut Hill requesting parking restrictions on Ward Street between Garrison Street and Manet Road. (Ward 7)
HELD ON APRIL 2, 2009 FOR 60-DAY TRIAL

ACTION: **Approve (3-2, Norcross, Schuckel opposed). No parking on the north side of Ward Street between Garrison Street and Manet Road, Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m – 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, Wednesday October 14, 2009.**

NOTE: Mr. and Ms. Harrington and Ald. Sangiolo joined the Council for discussion on this item. Ms. Harrington stated she believes the trial has had a positive impact on reducing the number of cars parking on this block and improving pedestrian safety. She hopes this trial will become permanent.

Mr. Schuckel presented the Council with a PowerPoint presentation. He stated that there are three homes that border the south side of Ward Street, only one of which has a driveway (#108) and there are no sidewalks. The reservoir slopes down to the curb and fencing on the north side of this block

The 60-day trial approved on April 2, 2009 restricted parking on the north side of Ward Street between Garrison Street and Manet Road, Monday through Friday 8-10 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m. One aspect of this trial was to examine the ability for pedestrians to walk on the street. The trial did eliminate most of the parking by BC students. A speed study was conducted, indicating that 1,000 cars per day travel on this block, with 85% going 30 mph or less. The value of the study was limited, however, because no previous studies were available for comparison.

Mr. Schuckel said this item represents a Traffic Council policy decision. In his view, parking is not up against a residence, and has a traffic calming effect, even though the south side does not have a sidewalk. Mr. Schuckel asked Traffic Council members to consider whether it is safer for pedestrians to walk on a 24' wide-open road or on a road with cars parked along one entire side. Mr. Schuckel stated that he believes the trial was too restrictive, and made a motion to restrict parking from 7 a.m. and 9 a.m., Monday through Friday.

Mr. Harrington presented the Council with photos taken during the trial period illustrating that cars are parked on both sides of Ward Street with pedestrians walking in the middle of the street. He stated that the critical difference between this and other streets is that this street lacks a sidewalk, forcing pedestrians to walk in the street. He said that the trial has worked well and

enforcement has been moderately consistent. Sgt. Norcross said that he did not hear valid reasons as to why parking on Ward Street should be restricted. However, he would not support changing the trial hours, as the parking control officers are already accustomed to these hours. He said that 7 am to 9 am parking restrictions could not be enforced because the parking control officers are at their school crossing station until 8:45 am.

Mr. Koses agreed with Mr. Schuckel that Traffic Council should consider this as a policy decision. He said that Boston College students should be paying for parking on campus and not parking free in the neighborhood. He would like to see a restriction on the north side of Ward Street. Mr. Grafe said the parking trial hours were made, in part, to accommodate walking schoolchildren.

Ald. Sangiolo asked if a pedestrian count was completed in this area and perhaps before changing hours this should be completed. She asked if a sidewalk could be installed on the residential side of Ward Street

Ald. Danberg said it would be a benefit to have one side of the street restricted to make it safer for pedestrians. She said that a 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. restriction would simply prevent BC students from parking on Ward Street until 9:00 a.m. Mr. Schuckel amended his motion to restrict parking from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. on the north side. Ald. Danberg made the suggestion of a one-year trial parking restriction from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Both motions failed. Mr. Koses made a motion for no parking on the north side of Ward Street between Garrison Street and Manet Road, Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. This motion passed 3-2, Sgt. Norcross and Schuckel opposed.

TC60-08 ALD. SANGIOLO, HARNEY AND GENTILE requesting two-hour parking restrictions along Hancock Street near the corner of Grove Street up to Williston Road and two-hour parking restrictions on both sides of Williston Road near the intersection of Hancock Street. (Ward 4)

HELD ON APRIL 30, 2009 FOR 60-DAY TRIAL

ACTION: Approve (5-0). No parking, west side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street, and no parking 8:00 am – 10:00 am, Mon-Fri, east side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street.

NOTE: Ald. Sangiolo and Harney joined the Council for discussion of this item.

Ald. Sangiolo observed that the trial has removed parking in front of the Walker Center at the narrowest point of Hancock Street, but some vehicles continue to park in the neighborhood.

Mr. Schuckel stated that a 60-day trial was approved for no parking, west side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street, and no parking 8:00 am 10:00 am, Mon-Fri, east side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street. He that stated Hancock Street is 20' wide, too narrow for two-way traffic and parking.

Mr. Schuckel provided the Council with a PowerPoint presentation indicating that, this week, he observed nine vehicles parked on the east side of Hancock Street, north of Williston Road. Three vehicles were parked on Williston Road. He made the motion to make the trial permanent, also acknowledging Williston Road may ask for restrictions later.

Ald. Danberg asked Ald. Sangiolo and Harney where overflow traffic parks during Walker Center events. Ald. Sangiolo said that she has suggested that they try to park at the MBTA station and be shuttled.

Mr. Koses said that he received several letters in support of making this trial permanent, but is concerned about parking along Williston Road between Hancock Street and Leighton Road. Ald. Harney stated if Williston Road residents request a parking restriction, he would be happy to support them.

Council members approved Mr. Schuckel's recommendation to make the trial permanent. No parking, west side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street, and no parking 8:00 am – 10:00 am, Mon-Fri, east side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street, approved 5-0.

TC4-09 ALD. LENNON on behalf of Patricia Walsh Greene, 39 Jefferson Street and other residents of Nonantum Place requesting parking restrictions on Nonantum Place to discourage commuter parking, (Ward 1)

HELD ON APRIL 30, 2009 FOR 60-DAY TRIAL

ACTION: **Hold (5-0). Extend trial of permit-parking restriction on the east side of Nonantum Place between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Item will be heard again at November 19 Traffic Council meeting, in conjunction with Jefferson Street, to be docketed.**

NOTE: Ald. Lennon and Ms. Greene joined the Council for discussion on this item.

Mr. Schuckel presented the Council with a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Schuckel stated in April that the Council approved a change in the resident permit-parking restriction on the east side of Nonantum Place between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The Engineering Department observed fewer vehicles parking due to the restriction.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion to members of the public who were present.

Public Comment:

Patricia Walsh Green, 39 Jefferson Street, said that she has had to endure commuters parking in front of her home. Over the summer, there has been an improvement to commuters and business people parking on Nonantum Place. Since the summer, conditions got worse as people move their vehicles to avoid being ticketed. Restaurant patrons park on Nonantum Place and Jefferson Street, creating difficulty for some residents to access their driveways. Residents are being ticketed because they are being forced to park on the street. She recommended residential

parking permits on Jefferson Street and Nonantum Place. She could not support any business enlarging because of parking problems.

Judy Groleau, 45 Jefferson Street, said that the narrowness of the street poses a danger to residents, makes it difficult for emergency apparatus to travel on the street, and poses a safety concern for children with cars parked on both sides. She supports residential parking permits on Jefferson Street and Nonantum Place. She could not support a restaurant expansion unless she sees steady enforcement of parking issues.

Philippe Wells, owner Prana Yoga and Raw Cafe, 292 Centre Street, said he supports his neighbors and wants to work with them. Nonantum Place and Jefferson Street are both very narrow streets. He said that he would ask for a zoning variance to allow for additional seating at Prana Cafe. He said that there are limited restrictions that would need to take place in this area, and feels that there is adequate public parking in Newton Corner.

Ald. Lennon stated that the "tot lot" will be renovated and the City should allow for parking on Nonantum Place. He suggested that a resident parking program trial be established to bring relief to residents until the tot lot is renovated.

Mr. Koses stated that the trial restrictions may have worked well on Nonantum Place. He also stated that Jefferson Street and Nonantum Place should be examined together. He asked Mr. Wells about the typical length of a yoga class. Mr. Wells said that it would take over an hour for a client to complete a typical class. Mr. Koses suggested that a "one-hour limit, except Resident Sticker," restriction would work best for residents and visitors on this street. Sgt. Norcross said he was not in favor of one or two-hour parking restrictions, as they are too labor intensive.

Mr. Grafe asked for clarification on the resident sticker-parking program. Sgt. Norcross stated that certain streets throughout the City have resident stickers, but the program is currently very limited; there are approximately 20-30 streets in the City having this program. No new residential stickers have been issued for new streets in at least a decade. Ald. Lennon said that it would be unfair to penalize petitioners requesting residential permit parking programs simply because permits have not been issued in a decade.

Ald. Danberg suggested implementing restrictions in the morning and afternoon hours, to make it difficult for commuters to park on this street all day. Ald. Danberg made the motion to implement resident parking restriction between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., and between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Mr. Schuckel asked that her motion be separated, as he is not convinced of the need to have an afternoon restriction. Ald. Lennon asked if the trial could be extended, noting that he would docket a review of traffic and parking on Jefferson Street. Ald. Danberg amended her motion to hold this item. The Council voted in favor, 5-0, to extend the trial of permit-restricted parking on the east side of Nonantum Place between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The item will be heard again at the November 19, 2009 Traffic Council meeting, in conjunction with Jefferson Street.

on one side of Kennedy Circle to ensure safe access for emergency vehicles.
(Ward 1)

ACTION: Approve (5-0). No parking along the outer ring within the middle section of the “Horseshoe” (between two telephone poles). This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, Wednesday October 14, 2009.

NOTE: Ald. Lennon stated that he docketed this item because he was asked by John Hacker of the Newton Housing Authority to relieve their concerns relating to emergency vehicles access by allowing parking on only one side. Ample resident parking is not available in the parking lot. Residents park on both sides of the street, making it difficult for emergency vehicles to pass.

Mr. Schuckel presented the Council with a PowerPoint presentation. He indicated the street is 24’ wide. A study showed the number of available parking spaces on either side. 24 spaces are available on the outer side of circle, 22 spaces are available on the inside of the circle. He believes there is enough parking capacity on one side to implement a parking restriction. He visited the site on September 23, 2009 and indicated that 18 cars were parked during peak time at 6:00 pm. Mr. Schuckel supports a one side parking restriction. Mr. Danila suggested parking be restricted on the outer side of the circle within the middle section of the horseshoe between two existing telephone poles.

Mr. Grafe made the motion to approve this item. Council members approved 5-0. No parking along the outer ring within the middle section of the “Horseshoe” (between two existing telephone poles).

HP1-09 MAYOR COHEN requesting two handicapped parking spaces (a) on 108 JFK Circle and (b) one (1) opposite 108 JFK Circle. (Ward 1)
(Approved by Mayor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities)

ACTION: Hold (5-0). Hold item to allow for additional information. Item will be heard again at the October 22 Traffic Council meeting.

NOTE: Sgt. Norcross made the motion to hold this item pending additional information from the Mayor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities. Mr. Koses made a friendly amendment to hold this item for one month pending additional information and the Council voted in favor 5-0.

TC19-09 ALD. DANBERG, MANSFIELD AND PARKER requesting consideration of a trial of replacing two parking spaces in front of JP Licks in Newton Centre with outdoor seating during the summer months. (Ward 6)
HELD ON JUNE 15, 2009 FOR 60-DAY TRIAL

ACTION: NAN (5-0). End trial. Traffic Council supports permanent removal of four parking meters (L51-L54) and the creation of a permanent park.

NOTE: Mr. Schuckel presented the Council with a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Schuckel stated in June, Traffic Council voted to amend this docket item to permit seating and bicycle parking in the “Triangle Lot” by bagging meters there instead of on Langley Road.

Mr. Schuckel stated that the Langley Road lot does not typically fill up. Furthermore, the removal of these four parking spaces should be able to be accommodated elsewhere in Newton Centre. This study confirms previous findings that parking in Newton Centre typically reaches about 80% of available capacity, with the Langley Road and Cypress Street lots being the most highly utilized.

Mr. Schuckel made the motion to end the trial and return the parking lot to its original state. His preference over the next months is to have the Board of Aldermen consider whether this space should become a permanent park and for it to be designed properly.

Ald. Danberg asked whether asphalt would be necessary. Mr. Schuckel indicated asphalt or grass would work, but there could not be any fences, benches, or barriers in the area due to snow plowing and storage.

Ald. Danberg asked Mr. Koses about any feedback that he has received. Mr. Koses indicated the consensus on the outdoor seating has been positive and the park has been well used and could benefit with tables, umbrellas and additional bicycle racks. However, a few businesses rejected the idea of converting meters to outdoor space due to their concerns about inadequate parking availability.

Mr. Schuckel asked which Department would maintain this park and whether CPA funds could be used to fund this park. Mr. Grafe asked about the next steps. Mr. Koses indicated the Aldermen could docket this item for further discussion and design, and/or some group could apply for CPA funding. Mr. Grafe would like to be on record stating that the Council supports the park and is in favor of recommending that a permanent park be constructed along with the removal of the four parking meters. Sgt. Norcross noted that he has not received any complaints or negative feedback.

Ald. Danberg made the motion to end the trial, and the Council voted No Action Necessary 5-0. The Traffic Council supported the establishment of a permanent park at this location.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Traffic Council Chair